

Statement for Divine Strake Public Hearing

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In the light of Utah's tragic history of being downwind from atomic testing and the false reassurances that Utahns were given about the risks of exposure back then, the Department of Defense's credibility today is all-important. We are, after all, being asked to take them at their word about the risks associated with the Divine Strake. Are their reassurances today believable? Has their credibility improved?

Divine Strake is described by its federal facilitators as an "experiment" designed to understand the impact of a massive explosion on underground bunkers like the ones used by potential adversaries to hide weapons and weapons development facilities. The scale of the proposed Divine Strake explosion is many, many times the power of the largest conventional weapon at our disposal. The explosion is, however, on the scale of a small nuclear explosion. Yet I was told repeatedly at the DOD's poster session by their spokespeople that Divine Strake "is not at all related to anything nuclear." Logic says they are lying.

If Divine Strake produces an explosion so much larger than we can make with any conventional weapon but is "not at all" related to nuclear weapons use or development, then why do it? What use is the knowledge we would gain in the real world? Are the lessons learned of any practical use? Are we to believe the government is just interested in the results of this "experiment" in an abstract, theoretical, 'we're just curious' way? If I take them at their word that this test is unrelated to nuclear weaponry, then the experiment and associated costs and risks are clearly not necessary.

The honest and logical answer to the questions I pose, however, is that the Defense Department will *indeed* learn what impact a small nuclear weapon would have on an underground bunker and that information is obviously useful only if we either *use* a nuclear weapon currently in our arsenal for such a target or if we decide to *develop* a new kind of nuclear weapon for such a purpose.

So, I say to the Department of Defense: If you tell me a bald-faced lie about the purpose of this "experiment" at the outset and cynically think that I am so dumb that I will fall for such an obvious lie, then don't be surprised that I don't believe the rest of the information you give me about risks. Why would a reasonable person who knows he is being lied to about the purpose of your project, believe your interpretations of the risks of radioactive materials and toxic chemicals to drift downwind and taint our lungs and blood and bones? When you lie about what you are up to, you squander your credibility and all the additional information you provide about what you are doing is suspect. And, of course, this is not the first time we have been lied to about the dangers of testing at the Nevada Test Site.

But if the DoD *is* intending to use nuclear weapons or develop new ones to use, then what they are doing is heinous and obscene. Nuclear weapons kill and sicken innocent civilians indiscriminately because they cannot be contained or controlled – the collateral damage drifts downwind and contaminates whole watersheds and food webs.

So, if Divine Strake is, as the DoD claims, a mere experiment that is unrelated to known weaponry, then it is *unnecessary*. If it is a prelude to nuclear warfare, it is *insane* and *immoral*. Either way, it is *unacceptable*.